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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002938

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [PL](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: POLISH AMBASSADOR TO IRAQ INDICATED DIMINISHED  
ROLE FOR POLISH FORCES

REF: WARSAW 2786

Classified By: Charge d' Affaires David M. Satterfield for reasons 1.4

(a)

(b) and (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: Polish Ambassador to Baghdad Ryszard Krystosik told Charge d'Affaires July 10 that Poland will be phasing down its participation in MNF-I after December. The decision is not so much because of the expiration of UNSC resolutions as it is because the duration and scope of the deployment is beginning to strain the Polish military, particularly at a time of great change to the military. In addition, he confirmed that Poland's prime minister plans to visit Iraq later this month, and requested support for the visit. END SUMMARY.

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POLES PLAN TO REDUCE PRESENCE IN IRAQ  
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2. (C) Poland's Ambassador to Iraq Ryszard Krystosik, recently returned to Baghdad from a Polish chiefs of Mission conference in Warsaw, called on Charge d'Affaires on July 10 to discuss Poland's continued engagement in Iraq. He began by saying that Poland intends to change the nature of its military posture in Iraq. He recounted how Poland has been with the U.S. in Iraq since the beginning and is proud that the situation has been improving gradually in the sector it commands, Multi-National Division - Central-South (MND-CS). However, the Polish government believes it is time to begin to slowly reduce its presence in Iraq.

3. (C) Ambassador Krystosik hastened to point out that this change does not mean that the Poles will withdraw completely. Rather, they prefer to see the focus of their mission change. At first, it was to stabilize the situation. Now it is shifting more toward an emphasis on training the new Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) to do the job themselves. The Poles would rather concentrate on this training mission, which they believe will mean the commitment of fewer troops. The Ambassador assured Charge that although the Poles may ultimately be here in smaller numbers than before, their commitment will remain strong and the mission will continue. He estimated that there are 1,700 Polish troops in Iraq and speculated that the number will decrease to 1,500 by September. A further downsizing is likely to follow.

4. (C) Charge asked Ambassador Krystosik if the impending expiration in December of UNSCR 1546 is the reason for this change in approach, and whether the Polish view would be different were the resolution to be extended. The Ambassador replied that the plan to reduce Poland's presence would be the same. He explained that Warsaw's decision is not based solely on the status of the mandate, but mainly on the fact that it is becoming more and more difficult for Poland to maintain command of MND-CS. Some of its troops have served multiple tours of duty and the continued deployment is making it increasingly difficult to maintain the army's equipment. This is happening at a time when the Polish military is undergoing far-reaching and necessary reforms and changes due to its NATO commitments. Once a military force dependent heavily on conscription, it is now becoming an all-volunteer armed force. In addition, the Polish military has commitments elsewhere, such as Afghanistan. Its men and equipment simply cannot stand the strain of continued deployment in Iraq.

5. (4) Ambassador Krystosik added his own personal view that Poland's continued role in Iraq is likely to be influenced by domestic politics. He believes that the government in Warsaw may possibly change later in the year, and observed that the opposition parties are dissatisfied with the country's engagement in Iraq. In short, social ideals in Poland do not support the war. Nevertheless, said Krystosik, Poland is sending some very good units and an excellent commander this month to relieve the forces that are in Iraq. And, of course, he could not predict with certainty the outcome of elections. Krystosik made it clear that Poland's commitment remains strong, even if its future role will focus on training than is now the case.

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VISIT OF POLISH PRIME MINISTER  
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16. (C) Ambassador Krystosik confirmed that Polish Prime Minister Belka will lead a high-level delegation to Iraq on July 26 (reftel). The purpose of the visit is to further develop political and economic relations with Iraq and also to bolster the Iraqi leadership. Other members of the delegation tentatively include the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defense, National Economy, Finance, and Culture. In addition, the government spokesperson, journalists, and a number of businessmen primarily from the power and oil sectors will also accompany the delegation. The itinerary for the visit matches the one outlined reftel.

17. (C) The Prime Minister plans to meet with Iraqi PM Ja'afari and then engage in a plenary session focusing on broader issues to cement the Polish-Iraqi relationship. The ministers will meet with their counterparts. The Prime Minister also hopes to meet with the speaker of the Transitional National Assembly, President Talabani, and to hold a joint news conference. In the afternoon, the delegation plans to fly to Diwaniyah to witness the MND-CS change of command ceremony. On July 27, they will return to Baghdad, then fly on to Irbil where the PM Belka will meet with President Barzani of the Kurdistan Regional Government. They will then depart Iraq.

18. (C) Charge advised Krystosik that PM Belka should press the Iraqi government officials he meets to increase their public outreach activities. With Barzani, PM Belka should counsel him against taking any provocative steps in Kirkuk. Krystosik confirmed that the accent of the visit will be on affirming Polish support for a unified Iraq and its territorial integrity. He renewed the request made reftel for logistical support for the visit, and Charge assured him that the U.S. Mission in Iraq will do everything possible to help.

19. (U) REO HILLA, REO BASRA, REO MOSUL, and REO KIRKUK, minimize considered.  
Satterfield